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# ABELARD TO ELOISA:

A

## POETIC EPISTLE.

NEWLY ATTEMPTED.

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Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ  
Amisso queritur foetus, quos durus arator  
Observans nido implumes detraxit, at illa  
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen  
Integrat, et mœstis latè loca questibus implet.

VIRG.

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L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXXII.

ABELLARD TO BLOIS:

A

POLITICAL HISTORY

NEWLY ADDED

Quia populus nostrus Philothesius est  
Amicos de vobis habet, et vos de vobis  
Optimare non potestis, sed  
Iis nostris, et vobis de vobis  
Ingent, et vobis de vobis

LONDON

Printed for J. Bury, No. 12, Bury-Street, New

York

## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

**T**HE Story on which the following Poem is founded being generally known, a Recital is unnecessary. The Letters of Abelard and Eloisa are in the Hands of every Person of Taste, and will continue to be admired while the Passion of Love actuates the human Breast. Had the Writer of the following Epistle borrowed less from them, he might be thought to have deviated too much from the Subject: had he traced more closely, some Readers might have called him a mere Copyist.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T

THE story on which the following poem is founded being generally known, a factual is unnecessary. The Legend of Roland and his knights in the battle of Roncevaux and will continue to be related with the passion of Love and the human heart. Had the writer of the following Epistle borrowed his name from the knight he might have derived too much from the subject: had he traced more closely some Roland's might have called him a man of war.



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## ABELARD TO ELOISA.

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NO, Eloisa, witness ev'ry cell,  
In agonizing pray'r where oft I dwell,  
If cold my blood, my pulse inactive grown,  
I am indeed allied to stupid stone.  
Yet, were all sense of am'rous joy suppress'd,  
Did Memory no fading trace suggest,  
Sighs with such passion breath'd and words of fire,  
Might warm the coldest with unchaste desire.  
Dearer than sister ! can I think of thee,  
From tumult, rapture and distraction free ?  
I view thee still in all thy virgin charms,  
Fair as when first I won thee to my arms ;  
Again I view thee to a convent hurl'd,  
Cut off from me, and shut from all the world ;  
Then I recall that fatal scene of night——  
But what you know too well why should I write ?

B

I thought

I thought indeed within these solemn rounds,  
 Where the walls echo with religious sounds,  
 With piety the sinner's self might glow,  
 And learn to scorn the love of aught below.  
 Alas ! too little then I knew my heart,  
 How difficult with passion 'tis to part.  
 Yet mark th' examples which the world displays !  
 Arm'd with keen perjury man delighted strays.  
 E'en those are fickle in the first degree,  
 Who but in that too much resemble me :  
 But as I often swore so now I find,  
 No common bias sways my constant mind.  
 In vain in tomes replete with saintly lore,  
 A medicine for my sickness I explore :  
 Nor penitential tears, nor fasts controul,  
 The frantic ardour of my erring soul.

Am I, the wretch who with insidious art,  
 Allur'd you first from virtue to depart,  
 Am I invited penitents to teach,  
 And what my practice disavow'd to preach ?  
 My practice then, and my temptations now,  
 War in wild combat with a vestal's vow.  
 Ah ! no, too skilful once in am'rous fraud,  
 My tongue but feebly pleads the cause of God :  
 For, while I point to realms of endless light,  
 I sigh for earth, and downward bend my sight.

But



But my fair fop-hist Eloisa means  
 (Retorting arms I lent) to guilty scenes  
 My soul again with fury to impel,  
 And kindle all the subtle fire of hell.  
 Pardon thus rudely that thy name I treat,  
 Lovelier than light ! than music's self more sweet !  
 Which never should be mention'd but with joy,  
 And holy lutes of angels might employ.

Could Eloisa now that face survey,  
 Where mirth in triumph shone for ever gay ;  
 How would she start from the disgustful shade,  
 Of Abelard in horrid vests array'd !  
 No sparkles from his eyes emit the soul,  
 But down my ghastly cheeks dire sorrows roll.  
 Now sacrilegious ev'ry softer care,  
 I count my matin beads and freeze at pray'r.  
 The awful Judge I see, my sentence hear,  
 Condemn'd to scenes that hope must never cheer,  
 Where fiery darkness, grief that hardens reign,  
 And wretches loathe an adamant chain.  
 Still deeper plung'd in woe they rush away,  
 Down, down, ten thousand fathoms from the day,  
 Ten thousand thousand more, and where they rest,  
 Nor tongue can utter, nor can thought suggest.  
 Forbear to love what should provoke thy rage,  
 Think of my coldness, treachery, and age.

Insatiate



Infatiate sparks of ever young desire,  
 An object vast and durable require.  
 Love God; he is—who what he is can speak,  
 With whom compar'd all nature's power is weak?  
 Could we remove the curtain of the skies,  
 Which hides his lustre from our mortal eyes;  
 The height of beauty must deform'd appear,  
 And folly all that we style wisdom here.  
 Use not the tender names of friend and fire,  
 To the base captive of impure desire.  
 No more imagine me of human kind,  
 But without veil behold a demon's mind.  
 Unwilling others should your kindness share,  
 I sought to cloister you with guilty care.  
 Brother and husband never call me more,  
 But your youth's ruffian, or still worse explore.  
 To God I gave you when you took the veil,  
 Nor fear'd a rival though I thought you frail.  
 For who dares violate the sacred dome,  
 Where abstinence and pray'r have fixt their home.  
 Your husband God, no jealousy is mine;  
 To a celestial rival I resign.  
 Serenely then prolong your blameless days;  
 With meek-eyed Charity sing hymns of praise.

Ah! Abelard, should this induce belief,  
 Your eyes would stream with swifter rills of grief.  
 Did you resolve to write, with pious zeal,  
 To quench her love, and your exilement seal?

No,

No, not to heav'n itself I can resign,  
 On earth at least she shall be wholly mine ;  
 Nor floods, nor fire, nor force of kindred foes,  
 The charmer's invitation should oppose :  
 To my deserted mourning love I'll fly,  
 Press her warm heart, and on her kisses die.  
 Sever'd an age, the thought once more to meet,  
 Once more our old endearments to repeat,  
 Inspires with hatred to restraining walls,  
 My vow dissolves, and all the man recalls.  
 Brisk tides of joy rush through my throbbing veins,  
 And my heart dances to unusual strains.  
 Oh ! I could gaze for ever on her eyes,  
 Thence quaff delicious amorous supplies  
 Into my soul ; till speech in vain would show  
 The mighty transports that my breast o'erflow ;  
 Till left the wish that riots void of rein,  
 To sighs and looks and blushes to explain.  
 Yet looks and sighs but half express a flame,  
 Such wond'rous beauty something more might claim.

Though who that e'er had known the fears and pains,  
 Disgusts and dangers, doubts, delays, disdains,  
 Which always wait upon thy service, Love,  
 Beneath thy banners would a champion move ?  
 Henceforth then let us banish from our breast,  
 Visions of pleasure, enemies to rest,



Tumultuous oceans where the soul is tost,  
 Till Reason yield the helm, and Virtue's lost.  
 O Grace ineffable ! O Faith sublime !  
 Unlimited in space, uncheck'd by time,  
 In bold career ye gloriously are hurl'd,  
 Beyond the bound'ries of this narrow world.  
 With rapture viewing Heav'n's immortal King,  
 Thence God's best benison to man ye bring :  
 A bliss sincere which nothing can destroy,  
 Which angels in triumphant light enjoy ;  
 Winter it smooths, makes summer lovelier glow,  
 And paradise unfading plants below.

What blessings on the humble abbot wait !  
 Above proud monarchs in their anxious state,  
 He leaves a world that sings self-flatt'ring songs,  
 Whose smiles are snares, whose benefits are wrongs ;  
 To hold with God among the first-born race,  
 Perpetual intercourse of praise and grace.  
 Welcome as morning to the wand'rer's sight,  
 Pure as the silver streams of lunar light,  
 Doubt solves her veil, and Zeal her lamp supplies,  
 At joys immortal sparkling in his eyes.  
 With holy pray'r heav'n's portals he unbars,  
 And ever watches like th' unwearied stars.  
 Alms are his hoard from moth and rust secure,  
 His brethren are the faithful and the poor.

His



His soul imbibes Simplicity's mild ray;  
 Direct effulgence from eternal day!  
 He fathoms truth, and for his darling flock,  
 Draws living water from a heav'nly rock.  
 For penitents he heaves condoling sighs,  
 Next to their tears a grateful sacrifice!  
 Though skill'd in tongues of men and seraphs lore,  
 Meek charity he clasps, and prizes more.  
 Hope, ever fair, his blissful dreams inspires,  
 And Faith excludes e'en innocent desires.  
 Suns rise to view this habitant of clay,  
 To light approaching nearer ev'ry day:  
 Till, "hither!" calls the Lamb; the Spirit cries,  
 "By soft transition mingle with the skies!"

But what dire tumults kindle in my breast,  
 Marring ideas of celestial rest?  
 Still must this heart, O Eloisa, prove  
 The wretched theatre of guilt and love?  
 By our youth's flight, by Eloisa's wrongs,  
 By the worst calumny of pious tongues,  
 By that abhorred night's consummate woes,  
 Oh! spare me, Love, and leave me to repose.  
 Alas! the recreant's pray'r that pow'r disdains,  
 He fires my heart, and triumphs in my pains:  
 All Eloisa rises to my view,  
 My former wounds now deepen'd bleed anew.

What

What charms with thine, my spouse, can I compare?

A woman's fondness, and a cherub's air;

A blush of mildness breaking on the sight,

Like emanating beams of new born light;

A breath more sweet than all Arabia blows;

Lips that excel the ruby and the rose;

On these, as bees on fragrant roses play,

I could in kisses wear my life away.

Thy eyes diffuse inimitable fire;

Thy voice might warble with a seraph's lyre,

Soft as expiring notes at distance die,

And gentle as the murmurs of a sigh.

But, Oh! thy breast, inspiring vast delight,

Luxuriant Fancy whelms with dazzling white.

Thy graceful motion, and thy shape conspire

To feed the flame of Love's immortal fire.

With wonder I grow giddy while I gaze,

And lose my soul in beauty's charming maze.

When solemn Night led on her starry train,

While momentary Slumbers held their reign;

Before the altar late methought I stood,

Dispensing to the croud celestial food:

What time I shar'd the Saviour's mystic sign,

I felt conviction, energy divine!

I look'd, and lo! the God who mangled bore

The sins of humankind, debas'd no more.

All



All glorious from the sepulchre he rose,  
 With gifts for men, and benefits for foes.  
 Around him angels, clust'ring with their wings,  
 Struck their bold harps, and hail'd him King of kings,  
 Devolving in full tide the void along,  
 High warbled melody from soothing song.  
 Satan, like light'ning, at that moment fell,  
 In adamantinè bonds consign'd to hell.  
 He fell, and mounting, smil'd Heav'n's victor Lord,  
 Bright clouds investèd him, and fairs ador'd.  
 Glitt'ring with foillefs gems a crown he wore,  
 Whose diadem was pointèd thorn before.  
 Mild youth and majesty shone in his face,  
 His eyes diffus'd unutterable grace.  
 Hither! all ye who thirst for life, he cried,  
 And live abundantly with health supplied.  
 Within me then a gentle whisper stole,  
 Now banish Eloisa from thy soul.  
 A dawning wish too lent its feeble aid,  
 And for release from love almost I pray'd.  
 The God I follow'd with my aching fight,  
 Till nature fainted in the panting flight.  
 With fairs immaculate above he reigns,  
 And finners leaves to voluntary stains.

How worthless is the learning of the schools!  
 No stoic yet was made by rigid rules,

D

The



The highest efforts of the reas'ning art,  
 That teach the tongue to combat with the heart,  
 Like wind to fire, dilate the fatal flame,  
 We quickly imitate the men we blame.  
 Crown'd with the honors won in Wisdom's field,  
 Could I have thought that I to Love should yield,  
 Who painted Virtue fair, and bade aspire,  
 Where faints reside while angels tune the lyre?  
 But, Eloisa, my repose's foe!  
 The swift transition of my cares you know:  
 How soon Philosophy resign'd it's arms,  
 And Rhetoric was brib'd to plead thy charms.  
 What cruel Fate my torment then approv'd?  
 I gaz'd, admir'd, and ere I knew I lov'd.  
 Yet, scorning hypocritic sages lore,  
 I ne'er had stoop'd to Passion's lure before.  
 Objects that others fancied fair, I deem'd  
 For features merely with disgrace esteem'd.  
 But Virtue beaming through a form divine,  
 With Wit conspir'd to make this bosom thine.  
 What arguments were us'd need I repeat,  
 (The tutor turn'd a suppliant at thy feet)  
 Till you consented gen'rously to rove,  
 Through all the labyrinth of flow'ry love?  
 Delightful day! when, ev'ry doubt resign'd,  
 We liv'd but one, and mingled mind with mind.

Esteem's

Esteem's warm pledges form'd our dear employ,  
 While words were found too rude to speak our joy.  
 My rapid murmurs prov'd my trembling frame  
 Glow'd then with more than friendship's feeble flame.  
 In sable chains loose flow'd your graceful hair,  
 With pride I view'd what might a king ensnare.  
 Your lovely bosom heav'd with frequent sighs,  
 And all your soul spoke rapture in your eyes.  
 What smiles remov'd each trace of groundless fear !  
 What broken whispers thrill'd your lover's ear !  
 Sweet as the fragrance of th' exhaling rose,  
 Soft as the fleeces of descending snows ;  
 Till our fond hearts on floods of bliss were tost,  
 And in the boundless transport life was lost.  
 Sometimes a victim to Love's scorching flame,  
 I dare e'en now thy delicacy blame.  
 We still had happy liv'd above the croud,  
 I cry, had Eloisa not been proud.  
 Forgetting that a passion so sublime,  
 Will spread thy name through long-revolving time :  
 Poets unborn shall in thy praise combine,  
 What once was criminal shall be divine.  
 Heav'ns ! when for ever in a dreary cell,  
 With Penitence and Pray'r you vow'd to dwell,  
 With what a glow of youth, and smiling face,  
 Confirm'd serenity and heav'nly grace,

You



You bade adieu to earth's contemned toys,  
 A candidate alone for deathless joys.  
 This from my bosom might distrust remove,  
 And the vain fear of earthly rivals prove.

Yet in a convent lastingly immur'd,  
 By friends forsaken, and from love secur'd,  
 While Youth with sprightly pulse beat in the blood,  
 And all her roses were but in the bud:  
 What stern-eyed stoic could refuse a tear?  
 What faint unmov'd could her profession hear?  
 From fields where flow'rs perpetual bloom display,  
 From fields of rosy light and endless day,  
 Spirits of rest! with visions bless her nights:  
 Visions, bright antepasts of heav'n's delights!

With solemn Cynthia vigils oft I keep,  
 And o'er some melancholy marble weep.  
 While thoughts desultory like billows roll,  
 That range the globe, and visit either pole,  
 Present, or past alike dejects my soul.  
 'Twixt Pain and Pleasure what a scene of strife!  
 But Woe predominating clouds my life.  
 My fortune early from my friends disjoin'd,  
 And all my av'rice riches of the mind.  
 (For what are India's gems and sparkling ore,  
 To Wisdom's charms and Wit's unfading store?)

Mad



Mad mischief meditating Envy view'd,  
 Religious Slander soon my steps pursu'd.  
 Then Eloisa's love, my cruel doom,  
 And, living, both pale tenants of a tomb.  
 For my poor bosom only now remain,  
 Exhaustless sorrows and distracting pain.  
 All the gay scenes that were my constant theme,  
 Have left me like a fair delusive dream.  
 Songs once I wrote, now preaching is my care,  
 For am'rous pastimes penance doom'd to bear.  
 He who clasp'd beauty, crown'd with flow'ry bloom,  
 Lies in a dormitory's lonely gloom :  
 Where level'd heroes, sleeping grandfires spread,  
 Through the still cloisters monumental dread.  
 A wretched exile in a barb'rous land,  
 I hear a language I don't understand.  
 From marble hearts what comfort could I gain ?  
 I tell my sufferings to the stormy main :  
 As if the stormy main would milder grow,  
 And sympathise with tearful tales of woe.  
 Could my dear Eloise the Abbey view,  
 She would not think that sacred name its due.  
 What ornaments adorn the pompous doors ?  
 The feet of hinds, and horrid heads of boars :  
 Of hideous animals the hides appear,  
 The cells at best are hung with skins of deer.

No solemn bell re-echoes round the walls,  
 But the shrill cock, or dog to matins calls.  
 On pamper'd steeds with noisy horns they bound,  
 And pleasure court upon forbidden ground.  
 Yet these are venial faults to what I dread,  
 The sword suspended at a slender thread.  
 With loud abuse they load if I complain,  
 Then flee my sight, a froward-tit'ring train!  
 By my vast wrongs to merit I desire,  
 And try to kindle piety's chaste fire.  
 Oh! God, I cry, from thy transcendent throne  
 Of light and life, make thy compassion known!  
 But earth-born sighs soon interrupt my pray'r,  
 And Eloisa still I fancy fair:  
 A thousand times I mention the dear name,  
 Each repetition fans my former flame.

Let my idea ne'er from thee depart!  
 Profoundly preys the signet on thy heart.  
 The lover's idol makes the soul its slave,  
 And jealousy sways cruel as the grave.  
 'Tis grief, 'tis scorn, 'tis hate, 'tis fierce desire,  
 It is a slow but sure consuming fire.  
 Though I have vow'd to love thee never more,  
 I here recant it, for I falsely swore.  
 O Eloisa can I coldly view,  
 The mighty debt of gratitude thy due?

What



What torture hast thou spar'd me ! if I fear  
Thy constancy, where doubts to none appear.

Curse on the savage author of my woe !  
Friendship's warm pleasures may he never know !  
Damn'd to his coffers, may he still suppose  
That all mankind are his united foes !  
Grant, Heav'n, that he may live a ling'ring date,  
Dreaded by children, crush'd by age's weight !  
May thieves diminish as he heaps his store,  
And the vile dotard sighing gripe for more !  
In his remembrance only leave his crime,  
No chearful sonnet to deceive the time !

Our present punishment we sadly know,  
But shall we thus all future pain forego ?  
Ah ! no, repentance must to cleanse begin,  
None enter heav'n's bright portals stain'd with sin.  
Far from the altar see ! yon fair who feels  
The pow'r of penitence, and humbly kneels ;  
Deep anguish in her countenance appears,  
Her tresses loose, her eyes dissolv'd in tears :  
Her past misconducts rise before her mind,  
How terrible ! where shall she succour find ?  
Shall she for pardon the great God implore,  
When 'tis almost a sin for her t'adore ?

Her

Her soul distracted at the prospect lies,  
 She wrings her hands and only, mercy ! cries ;  
 While heav'n itself affected at her woe,  
 Absolves her, and forbids her tears to flow.  
 Thus, Eloisa, we'll forgiveness seek,  
 Sighing petitions which we dare not speak.  
 And while from guilt we struggle for release,  
 Who knows but God at last may whisper peace ?  
 But souls like our's, so deeply plung'd in crime,  
 Content recover, and refine by time.  
 For absent pleasures often must we sigh,  
 And often must we wish, yet dread to die.  
 Till hoary age, the messenger of truth !  
 Detects the sophistries that dazzled youth.  
 As when his prince recalls an exile home,  
 O'er desert solitudes long forc'd to roam,  
 Or tost in tempests on the raging main,  
 He views with joy his native shore again :  
 Our crimes forgiv'n, such is the bliss to die,  
 With such a pleasure souls remount the sky.  
 Oh ! when this scene of vanity and guilt,  
 Where pride hath loftily her palace built,  
 Shall trembling own a far superiour pow'r,  
 While vice grows pale within the wanton bow'r.  
 What time the sun no more shall shed his ray,  
 To gild the flow'ry scene, and give the day ;

Night



Night call no more, from realms to fage unknown,  
 Her golden myriads round her azure throne.  
 May we together rise devoid of shame,  
 Our bosoms glowing with a nobler flame !  
 Deck'd with new youth, and in unfading vests,  
 May the Spouse welcome us, immortal guests !  
 Where only, Friendship no reverse can fear,  
 And without anguish triumphs Love sincere ;  
 Where ever flows, unruffled, joy's full tide  
 From God's own fount with purest streams supplied.

F I N I S.

Night call no more, from realms to late unknown,  
 Her golden myriads round her azure throne.  
 May we together rise devoid of shame,  
 Our bosoms glowing with a nobler flame!  
 Deck'd with new youth, and in unloading vests,  
 May the spouse welcome us, immortal guests!  
 Where only, Friendship no reverse can fear,  
 And without anguish triumphs Love sincere;  
 Where ever flows, untroubled, joy's full tide  
 From God's own fount with purest streams supplied.

F I N I S

R. Abolarius.